

Venue:

Community and School

Goal:

Collaborate with  
Community Based Programs,  
Prevent Initiation of  
Tobacco Use, and  
Conduct Interventions for  
Youth Who Use Tobacco

Activity:

\$6.01 School/Community  
Communication System,  
C2.08 Support  
Comprehensive School  
Policies and Programs,  
and \$5.02 Provide Youth  
Interventions/  
Support Programs



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- Population (Census 2000): 102,979
- Total Households (Census 2000): 38,852
- Adult Cigarette Smoking Prevalence (BRFSS/ATS 2003): 18 percent
- Estimated Number of Adult Cigarette Smokers (DOH 2004): 13,900
- Number of Students (OSPI 2003): 19,113
- Eighth Grade Cigarette Smoking Prevalence (HYS 2002): 11 percent

Skagit Countywide Diversion Program

Project Description

Skagit County's Tobacco Control Program and Northwest Educational Service District 189 created a countywide diversion program available to all middle and high school students.



Inputs

Rationale

The overall purpose of the project was to encourage schools in Skagit County to update and enforce their school tobacco policies. For schools to effectively enforce their policies they need to impose consequences that support students in quitting tobacco use.

There are a number of reasons for schools to promote and enforce tobacco-free environments including:

- Schools are responsible for protecting the children in their charge from dangerous products.
- Schools are responsible for providing a safe environment for students.
- Schools must be in the business of promoting health rather than enabling addictions.
- Schools can help delay the onset of smoking and significantly reduce the chance that youth will ever use tobacco regularly.

Target Audiences

- Primary: Youth using tobacco
- Secondary: Parents, school administrators, and staff

Resources

- Staff**
- School administrators, school staff, Educational Service District, and the Skagit County Tobacco Control Program.
  - Running the program takes about 8 hours a week.
- Funding**
- Educational Service District 189 and Skagit County Tobacco Control Program used their state Tobacco Prevention and Control Program funds.
- Partnerships**
- All six school districts in Skagit County, the Skagit County Tobacco Control Program, the Educational Service District

Activities

1. In the summer of 2002, the Skagit County Tobacco Control Program gathered information from other contractors who had implemented diversion programs in their counties and assessed the community needs.
2. A pilot diversion project was implemented at one high school in the fall of 2002.
3. A forum for school staff and administrators was held in early spring of 2003 that outlined the importance of updating and enforcing school tobacco policies. Emphasis was placed on adding procedural components such as diversion and cessation to school policies.
4. In the fall of 2004, follow-up calls were made to schools that did not update their policies.
5. The pilot was expanded to all of the middle schools and high schools in the six districts in the county.

Outputs

1. The Skagit County tobacco program and the Educational Service District used the needs assessment information and diversion program templates to develop a diversion program that includes both tobacco education and cessation components.
2. Students caught with tobacco the first time must attend a two-hour class on the health effects of tobacco, media literacy, and possible quitting methods that is offered monthly.
3. Students caught a second time must attend a seven-session class that uses the quitting curriculum, Ending Nicotine Dependence (END). This class is offered each semester after school at a central location. Both classes are open to anyone who wants to attend.
4. The Skagit County tobacco program and the Educational Service District held a diversion forum to present the program and its outcomes. As a result, all the school districts committed to begin. By June of 2003, three of the six districts officially updated their school tobacco policies. Those schools that were unable to update their tobacco policies committed to conducting pilot projects.
5. Currently, a diversion program is offered once a month at every high school in Skagit County.

Evaluation

The youth diversion pre- and post-test evaluation tools that are available through CATALYST were used to collect data on program participants. So far, during the 03-04 school year, 32 matched pre-post surveys were collected from Burlington-Edison, Sedro Wooley, Mount Vernon, Concrete, and State Street high schools and the Skagit County Juvenile Detention facility.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

- Most participants were male (79 percent).
- Half were age 16-17, and most of the rest were age 13-15.
- Nearly half reported that they were daily smokers (45 percent). One in five reported that they smoked a pack or more a day (21 percent).
- Half of the participants took the survey at a juvenile detention facility and one in five participants reported that they were not in school.
- Analysis of the pre- and post-test surveys showed positive, non-significant changes on nearly all of the questions. It is not reasonable to expect significant behavioral changes after a two-hour class.
- The information provided may help move youth along the stage of change toward quitting.
- About three fourths (77 percent) said that they would definitely tell their friends that it was a good class.

Lessons Learned

- Having the school contacts following up with administrators is necessary for implementation.
- If you are interested in doing a diversion program like this, meet with school administrators, make contacts in the schools and build strong relationships with them, and research what others have done.
- We would definitely recommend this project to others.